

Message Text

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17

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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R 060731Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4327

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 5274

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: ARREST OF ATTORNEYS TEFERI AND BEKELE

REF: STATE 101152

1. ETHIOPIAN ATTORNEYS TEFERI BERHANE AND BEKELE NADI WERE ARRESTED APRIL 24 IN MEGA, CLOSE TO KENYAN BORDER. TEFERI AND BEKELE WERE ATTEMPTING TO FLEE ETHIOPIA WITH THEIR FAMILIES IN A MERCEDES 280. \$US10,000 AND ONE-WAY PLANE TICKETS FROM NAIROBI TO EUROPE WERE FOUND IN THEIR POSSESSION.

2. ENTOURAGE CONSISTED OF THREE CARS. WHEN THE LEAD CAR, DRIVEN BY A GUIDE, DISAPPEARED, ATTORNEYS ASKED DIRECTIONS FROM A LOCAL INHABITANT. AFTER POINTING THE WAY TO KENYA, INHABITANT REPORTED THE GROUP TO LOCAL POLICE. ATTORNEYS APPARENTLY BELIEVED THAT SUCCESS WAS WITHIN THEIR REACH AND INEXPLICABLY PAUSED TO HAVE COFFEE. THEY WERE THEN OVERTAKEN AND ARRESTED BY ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES.

3. WE HAVE HEARD CONFLICTING REPORTS OF POSSIBLE CHARGES BROUGHT OR TO BE BROUGHT AGAINST TEFERI AND BEKELE. ONE SOURCE SAYS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH TAX EVASION. ANOTHER REPORTS THAT THE EPMG IS STILL DISCUSSING WHAT CHARGES SHOULD BE PRESSED. WIVES HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN RELEASED WITHIN PAST FEW DAYS.

4. ABOVE INFORMATION WAS NOT ELICITED BY EMBASSY BUT WAS
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VOLUNTEERED BY EMBASSY SOURCES. GIVEN THE LARGE NUMBER OF

ETHIOPIAN AND FOREIGN RESIDENTS HERE WHO HAVE FLED OR CONTEMPLATE
FLEEING ETHIOPIA, MATTER OF SUCH ESCAPE ATTEMPTS IS HIGHLY
VOLATILE ISSUE HERE. GIVEN PMAC SUSPICIONS OF EMBASSY'S
RELATIONSHIP WITH MEMBERS OF ANCIEN REGIME, WE TREAD EXCEEDINGLY
LIGHTLY IN SUCH CASES OF FLIGHT.
HUMMEL

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